

THE REHEARSAL.

Numb. 74

1. *The Difference betwixt the Supreme Authority of the High-Priest, from Moses to Saul, and that of Kings afterwards.*
2. *The Maintenance of the High-Priest.*
3. *The State and Majesty of the High-Priest.*
4. *His Guards, and Security. Wherein, of the Dignity of the Priesthood.*
5. *The Benefit of having Both Powers, Sacred and Civil, in the same Hand. Wherein of the Modern Contempt of the Priesthood.*

From Saturday November the 17th. to Saturday November the 24th. 1705.

(1.) *Country-man.*

BY your last Discourse Master, the High-Priest among the Jews was King, in all the time betwixt Joshua and Saul, except when ther was an Extraordinary Judge or Captain appointed upon an Extraordinary Occasion. But the Constant, Hereditary, and Supreme Government over all the 12 Tribes, was in the High-Priest. And he had an Authority even over that Judge, who was, to Go out, and Come in, according to his Direction. So that the High-Priest still Retain'd the Supreme Authority. And was not this to be King, in the most Strict and Literal Sense? Why then did the Jews desire a King, when they had one already, and always had one?

Rehearsal. I told you before, that God Governs Mediatly, by Men whom he Impowers. For his Person is far Exalted above our Sight or Understanding. As He said to Moses, *Exod. xxxiii. 20. Thou Canst not see my Face; for there shall no Man see me and Live.* Therefore since he did Govern the 12 Tribes, before they had a King, it was necessary that he shou'd Appoint some to Govern under him, and to Represent his Person. This was then the High-Priest with whom was the Miraculous *Urim and Thummim*. And therefore All, even the Judge himself, were to be Subject to him. He was the Type and Immediate Representative of God, and his Christ, of the Messiah to come. Who then was King of Israel, and often Appear'd to them. It was he who Appear'd to Moses in the Bush. And to Joshua, as Captain of the Host of the Lord. *Josh. 5. 14. 15.* He was the Angel who Redeem'd Jacob. *Gen. xlviii. 16.* And who led the Children of Israel through the Wilderness. He then was King, and the High-Priest his Constant Representative. As Moses and Joshua, and the Judges were for a Time.

Country-m. But Kings were his Constant Representatives, when they came in; and Hereditarily too. How then did the High-Priest differ from these? And was not the High-Priest, before they had a King, as Strictly and Properly a King, as any of the Kings afterward?

Rehearsal. There was this Difference. The Chief Employment of the High-Priest was to attend the Offices of Religion, wherein a Man do's Most Immediately Represent the Person of God, and of Christ his King. The 12 Tribes, under that Oeconomy, were Ordinarily left to the Civil Government of Each their own Prince or Ruler. Except in Cases of Difficulty, wherein the Ultimate Appeal was to the High-Priest, as I have shew'd in my last. These Princes might Assemble, each his own Tribe, for War, by his own Authority; which he cou'd not do under a King. Or the Princes of the Tribes might Join their Forces together, as they did against Benjamin, on Account of the Levit's Concubine. Which wou'd have been Treason under a King, to have Rais'd the Nation in Arms, without his Commission.

Country-m. But then, when the Tribes were Assembl'd, who shou'd Command the Whole? Or who shou'd March first, or last? There might be a Difference about this, these Princes being all Equal.

Rehearsal. 'Tis true. And therefore, in the Case before Mention'd, it is said, *Judg. xx. 18. And the Children of Israel arose, and went up to the House of God, and ask'd Counsel of God, and said, which of Us shall Go up first to the Battel against the Children of Benjamin? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first.*

And this was one Particular wherein God did Exercise the Office of a King among them; in Naming the Captains who shou'd Command all the 12 Tribes, and Assemble them together, upon Emergent Occasions.

And this was the very Particular, for which they Threw off the Theo-Crasie, and wou'd have a Constant King over them, to Assemble their Tribes, and to Command them; to Go in and out before them, and to Fight their Battels. For upon the Invasion of Nahash King of the Ammonites, God had not, as yet, Appointed any Captain over them, waiting his own Time and Manner of Delivering, as he had often done Miraculously before; and of which Samuel then minded them, Reciting their many Deliverances, from Moses, and downwards, to that very Day, *1 Sam. xii. 6. &c.* But they grew Impatient, and wou'd not Trust to God. But notwithstanding of all these former Deliverances, said, *Nay, but a King shall Reign over Us, when the Lord your God was your King,* said Samuel to them. *ver. 12.*

Country-m. This then was their Oeconomy before Saul. (See Master, if I take you Right) There was an Hereditary Prince over every Tribe. And an Hereditary High-Priest over them All. To Determine Differences among them, or any Case too hard for the Princes. And upon Emergent Occasions, God took Care of them, and Rais'd up a Deliverer for them.

(2.) But how did this High-Priest Live? Had he Lands and Revenue, and Rais'd Taxes? Had he Guards, and Armies; and did he set up for the State and Grandure of a King? Since he was little less than a King; tho' not altogether such as the Kings of other Nations, or as the Kings of Israel afterwards, which you have shew'd.

Rehearsal. Neither He, nor his Tribe of Levi had any Inheritance among the other Tribes. The Lord was their Inheritance. That is, the Offerings and Sacrifices of the Lord, which HE gave unto them *Deut. xviii. 1, 2.* And which they Enjoy'd afterwards, when Kings were set up. So that the whole Charge of a King was Sav'd. The People had all the Benefit of a King, without the Expense,

(3.) Then for the State of a King, it cou'd make no Addition to that of the High-Priest. GOD himself Contriv'd and Prescrib'd his Royal and most Magnificent ROBES. In which when he Appear'd, it was Death for any so much as to Touch him. Therefore (as some think)

Golds

Golden Bells were hung round the Border of his Vestment; which Sounding as he went, gave Notice of his Approach, that all might keep their Distance, and pay Reverence to him. Alexander the Great, when in the full Sail of his Conquests, he came to Sack Jerusalem, was so Struck and Astonished, with the Magnificence of the High-Priest, coming out to meet him, in these his Royal ROBES, (such as Alexander, in all his Greatness, had never seen before) And Attended by his Brethren the Priests, in their several Orders, and Sacred Vestments; was so overcome with the Majesty of the Appearance, That he threw himself from off his Horse, at the Head of his Army; And fell down to Worship the Glorious High-Priest. Nor Durst do any injury to that City or Nation which had such a Head. But on the Contrary, he Heap'd Favours upon them, and Left them. And Declar'd that God had once Appear'd to him in those same Robes of Majesty.

But they were Mysterious and Typical, as well as Majestical. They Represented the whole World; then the Church in Higher Manner; and God himself Supreme, the Head of all. These struck Reverence into Angels, as the outward Form had done to Alexander. Thus Aaron is Describ'd, standing betwixt the Dead and the Living, with his Incense in his hand, to stop the Destroying Angel. Wisd. xviii. 23, 24, 25. When the Dead were now fallen down by heaps one upon another, standing between he stay'd the Wrath, and parted the way to the Living: For in the Long Garment was the whole World; and in the four Rows of the Stones, was the Glory of the Fathers graven; and thy Majesty upon the Diadem of his Head. Unto these the Destroyer gave place, and was Afraid of them, &c.

Now was the Majesty of any King ever Equal to this? Solomon in all his Glory was not Arayed like this High-Priest!

(4.) Country-m. This was Majesty indeed! Beyond any King or Emperour in the World! But had the High-Priest no Guards to secure this his Majesty from the Insults of People if so Dispos'd; For this seems Necessary to Majesty.

Rehears. He had the whole Tribe of Levi for his Guards. And in their Courses, to Attend his Person. These were Maintain'd by the Offerings of the Lord, and so No Charge to the People, as before is said of the High-Priest.

And all their Persons were made so Sacred by God, that is was Greater Sacrilege to Invade any of them, than to Rob the Temple or the Altar. As Holy Persons are more Holy, and Respect GOD nearer, than Holy Things.

Thus God made the Priests, Holy. Lev. xxi. 8. Thou shalt Sanctify him therefore, for he Offereth the Bread of thy God; he shall be Holy unto thee. This was in Regard to their Office. For they were not Exempted from Personal Failings, as being Compassed with Infirmities, like other Men.

They were most Signally Distinguished, and Prefer'd in Honour before all the other Tribes. Insomuch that the others were call'd Profane, in Respect of Levi, which was Holy. As the Jews were the Holy Nation, in Respect to others, which were call'd Profane. And their Land was the Holy Land. yet it was Profane in Respect of Jerusalem the Holy City. Nay, the very Suburbs of Jerusalem, were call'd Profane, in Respect of the City. Ezek. xlviii. 15. And the City was Profane in Respect to the Temple, which was more Holy. And the Sanctuary was more Holy than the Rest of the Temple. In Respect of which, the Bounds of the Sanctuary are call'd the

Profane place. Ezek. xlii. 20. Then within the Vail, where the High-Priest alone Enter'd, once in a Year, was more Holy than the Sanctuary, where other Priests Officiated; therefore was call'd the Holy of Holies. This Represented Heaven. But the Priest was more Holy than This. For he Represented Christ himself, the Great High-Priest.

Hence any Dishonour done to a Priest was call'd Profaneness, or to any thing Related to him. Lev. xxi. 9. And the Daughter of a Priest, if she Profane her self, by playing the Whore, she Profane her Father; she shall be Burnt with Fire. He was not to Marry a Woman that was Profane. ver. 24. Explain'd ver. 25. He shall not Profane his Seed among his People. They were Profane in Respect to him. And the Reason given ver. 12. For the Crown of the Anointing Oil of his God is upon him. Therefore he was not to Mourn for the Dead, as the Laity were. But in all things to keep up his High Dignity. As it is Express'd ver. 4. He shall not Defile himself, being a Chief man among his People, to Profane himself. It was Counted Profaness, if a Priest Marry'd the Widow of any Lay-Man. Ezek. xlii. 22, 23. Neither shall they take for their Wives a Widow, or her that is put away; but they shall take Maidens of the Seed of the House of Israel, or a Widow that had a Priest before. And they shall teach my People the Difference between the Holy and Profane. And ver. 19. They were Commanded to Put off their Garments wherein they Ministred, and lay them in the Holy Chambers, and to put on other Garments, when they went into the outer Court, to the People, with this Reason, And they shall not Sanctify the people with their Garments.

Here was a Mighty Difference put betwixt the Tribe of Levi, and the other Tribes. As there is in the Prophetical Blessing which Moses Pronounced upon the 12 Tribes. Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9, 10, 11. Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy Holy One— They shall teach Jacob thy Judgments, and Israel thy Law, they shall put Incense before Thee, and whole Burnt-Sacrifice upon thine Altar. Bless, O Lord, his Substance, and Accept the Work of his Hands. Smite threw the Loins of them that Rise against him, and of them that Hate him, that they Rise not again. The like is not said of any of the other Tribes.

Here is all the Security possible against the other Tribes Invading that of Levi. When so Deep a Regard and Reverence to it was Impress'd by God upon them from the Beginning. And Wonderfully Vindicated, in the Judgments of Dathan and Abiram. And Confirm'd a new by Miracle, in the Budding of Aaron's Rod. Num. xvii. As well as of the Submission and Duty of the Tribe of Levi to their High-Priest, in the Destruction of Korah, and his 250 Levites, who Role up against Aaron.

And if any of the Tribes shou'd Rebel against the Authority of the High-Priest, their then Supreme Civil Governor, in the Times we are speaking of; the other Tribes, we must suppose, wou'd Assist the High-Priest, and the Tribe of Levi, against them.

Here then was the Security of the High-Priest, both in his Ecclesiastical and Civil Government. The Levites for his Guard. And except an Universal Defection of all the other Tribes together, and at the same Time; being out of the Power of any Lesser Combination. A greater Security than most Kings can Boast of. Besides this, not to be Forgotten; that none cou'd Rebel against him, but they must at the same time, Renounce their Law, given them from God, and forsake their Religion, and whole Spiritual Economy, of which he was the Head.

(5.) Country-m. Methinks Master, from this, that it wou'd be a Great security to Government now, if Both these Powers, the Sacred and the Civil, were in the same Hand, as Then; and the same Person to be Head both of Church and State. There have been many Contests and Troubles betwixt these Powers.

Rehears. That is, because the one Enroach'd upon the other. The Secular Power Affecting the Government of Spirituals: and in Requital, the Spiritual Power taking up the Civil Coertion; and Depoling Kings. According to the Principle and Practice of the Pope, and the Presbyterians.

But if Both Powers were in the same Person, as from the Beginning, Both were Annex'd in the Primo-Geniture. And are now in Christ, it wou'd take away these Differences. Thus you see God Ordain'd it in his Theo-Cratick; He was both Priest and Judge. Tho' God Rais'd up other Judges, at times, Chiefly for Fighting, when they were Distress'd by their Enemies. But the Ordinary Government was still in the High-Priest.

And the Heathens did Imitate the Wisdom of God in this, Choosing their Emperors from among their Priests. And the same Person was both High-Priest and Emperor.

But we live in an Age, where the Priesthood is brought to that Contempt, as to be thought below a Gentleman. And is made the Common Buffoonry of Loose and Atheistical wits. And which is much more; all this is EN-DUR'D!